relieve the mean appearance which this portion of the church presents. The chancel walls are carried too high; they should not range level with the transepts, but considerably lower, thus varying the monotonous outline of the roofs. The entrance door of the sacristy, piercing the buttress of the transept, has an inconsistent appearance. The apsidal arrangement of the chancel produces a mean effect in the outlines of the roof, and is but a poor compensation for the elegantly proportioned east window and gable.

I feel convinced, after a minute examination of the principal ecclesiastical edifices in course of erection in the metropolis and suburbs, that, with all our improved mechanical appliances—with all the advantages afforded by excellence of execution, both in wood and stone (for our carvers and sculptors, within the last few years, have so surprisingly perfected themselves in the execution of Gothic details, as to be capable of rivalling, in their several departments, the most admired and boasted productions of the mediæval period), the architects of this age have yet to unravel the mystic geometric rules which guided the secret fraternities in proportioning their edifices. R. P. C.

PAYMENTS OF ARCHITECTS' COMMISSION.

Sir,—I quite agree with your correspondent, "Fides," who alludes to the evil of some architects charging commission to their contractors as well as their employers. The evil of such a practice is indeed incalculable, and most assuredly fraught with nothing short of the annihilation of our calling or profession; if allowed, in horticultural parlance, to "run to seed."

"Fides" says, "the remedy lies with that moral principle which should exist in the breast of every man." But, Sir, in (as there must exist in these cases) the utter absence of this "moral principle" some more vigorous antidote ought, I think, to be created, to defend the building world, and poor architects more particularly, from the evil he so justly complains of. It, with the present villanous system of competition, might be successfully grappled with by the institute, were that body alive to the real interests of the art and of the profession.

What, Mr. Editor, will avail the *honest* pursuit of the art should the evil in question grow prevalent? The present commission, 5 per cent., is really with your *bond-fide* architect *hard earned money*, and yet it is by no means uncommon to hear of architects taking 2 and 3 per cent. for their services. Where architects who *regularly practise* (?) on such terms eke out *their* commission as "A Tradesman" suggests in THE BUILDER of the 8th ult., it must follow that other architects, who ask 5 per cent., and (on the mere ground that it is written, "Thou shalt not steal") intend to take *that only*, will be looked on as extortioners, and go to the wall.

Now, I am confident that very many members of the profession resist this vile temptation, the *heavy sin* of which lies at the door of the tradesman and architect alike, whatever modern social philosophy may say of the exact quantity of honour required from each: and I wish you could stir up the institute to take some steps that might protect these recipients of commission by single entry from their unworthy brethren of the double-entry school, who thus bring obloquy on their profession.*

Methinks I frequently meet in your paper with the phrase "Let the institute look to it;" and I cannot but thank you for the efforts you have lately made to rouse that torpid body to the settlement of the question of professional charges generally. As this and the question of competition now stands, our noble profession is at the mercy of every† Attorney-General and every quack-engendering Committee; and once again I say "Let the institute see to it!" Meantime, Sir, as a more practical remedy than the "moral principle" advocated by "Fides," I suggest that henceforth architects serve their clients *gratis*—drawing (with their employers' cognizance) their 5 per cent., *or as much as they can get*, from the tradesmen alone. This would put an end to the system at once, transforming Sir Architect into the builder's servant; which, an it be not nobler than the client's unfaithful watch-dog, call me no longer your obedient servant,

London, Aug. 2, 1848. An Architect.

* By a rule of the Institute, proof of the fact would subject a member to expulsion.—Ed.

† See THE BUILDER, Vol. 4, page 61, Mason Ward.

Sir,—The "Tradesman" who favoured you with a communication some time since on the subject of architects' charges, would have done well had he been more guarded in his assertions. It is an uncharitable and false conclusion to write down every man a thief because you have had your pocket picked. This gentleman has, it appears, in the exercise of his calling, met with unprincipled men, willing to take bribes. Is there any marvel in that? What profession, from divinity to cookery, lacks members who are a disgrace to it? That there is a large class of men, more especially in country places, who, with the most superficial knowledge of the theory and practice of the art, gained chiefly by apprenticeship to divers trades, call themselves architects and surveyors, is not to be denied. These depend on the class to which they belong for support and countenance, and are more often employed by regular builders than by those who build of necessity, or without practical knowledge. Now it is that class who chiefly, if not entirely, bring discredit and contumely on the profession,—first, by their incapacity, which is their misfortune, indeed, rather than their fault, and again by giving their services for a low remuneration, trusting to make up the deficiency by the "commission at the other end." This admits of proof; nor is it strange that it should be so. The sympathies of that class are naturally with the tradesman originally; they feel with and for him, and there has been no ordeal for them to pass through whereby to free themselves from their class prejudices and connections. With the regularly-educated architect the case is totally different; and if he be an honourable man, he will never give any tradesman the slightest chance of insulting him by offering a douceur. I well remember the answer of a gentleman who stands now very high in the profession, though then in the midst of early struggles, to a builder who offered him money to "make it right for him;" it was this: "Do you think I am as great a rogue as yourself?"

I am, Sir, &c.,

An Architect.

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

A DIFFERENCE of rather a critical nature has arisen between the engine-drivers and firemen on the southern division of that leviathan Company the North Western, and their new superintendent, backed by the directors, who support him in carrying out a certain new regulation, offensive to the drivers and firemen. The regulation objected to consists in a classification of the drivers and firemen into different ranks, according to the will or decision of the superintendent, practically operative in reducing the class and wages of the workman, in place of fining him, in cases of negligence, and in raising both in cases of merit. The men, however, while they express themselves quite satisfied with their present rate of wages and advancement, dependent on the length of time for which their employers may have found it their interest to keep them on, are determined not to accept of a regulation which they conceive will place them at the mercy, or caprice, or personal prejudice of any one man, such as the superintendent, who reserves to himself the power to raise or degrade them, independently altogether of the length of their services. Besides all this, too, the men allege that reductions of the wages of the operatives being the order of the day with their directors, they have no doubt that the classification scheme is designed to reduce their wages also. They deny the counter-assertion that they have combined to resist the new regulation; but admit that all, with scarcely an exception, sent up their notices to quit at one and the same time, and by one and the same train, to head quarters,—rather a remarkable instance of unanimity without combination. Meantime, at a recent meeting amongst themselves, some startling assertions and details were made, which, if correct, reveal a temporary state of things utterly inconsistent with the public safety. One driver, for instance, declared that, on being desired by Mr. M'Connel, the new chief of the locomotive department, to take five or six men with him on the engine, in order to teach them how to drive—he candidly told him, that with so many on the small foot-plate of the engine he could not do justice to his own duties, and was forthwith displaced by one of the very men whom he was to teach, and who ran the train into an embankment, though preceded by a pilot-engine. Another, referring to the same case, said that at Wolverton the boiler was so short of water that he was quite alarmed lest it should explode ere water could be introduced, and that the foreman there would not himself go on the engine along with the new driver, who was staggering with drink at Rugby on the same occasion. That the drivers have themselves compelled the directors to employ the police to be on the out-look, and to compel them to do their duty till the fortnight's notice expires, can be gathered even from their own endeavours to ring the alarum on the subject of the public safety, which they have also done in a communication to the Railway Commissioners, who, on that ground alone, have felt themselves compelled to interfere by opening a correspondence with the directors, so that it is to be hoped that, in one way or other, the public safety will be insured, if not the unfortunate difference amicably settled.——In a sheriff's court case at Swansea lately, the sum of 665*l.* odds was assessed as damages, due by the South Wales Company to a Mr. E. John, lessee of property taken by them, and for which he claimed 5,000*l.*, while the Company offered 150*l.*!——The South Wales Railway bridge across the Usk is in rapid course of re-erection. In the first construction there were six trusses to each arch: there will now be but five, placed so as to make the bridge, it is thought, lighter and stronger. The danger of fire is, it is said, entirely removed. The centre arch will be of iron. The work will be finished in about six months. The great tunnel, at the back of Newport, is completed throughout, with the exception of the masonry at the entrances.

ELECTRO-TELEGRAPHIC.

The charge for the transmission of messages has been reduced:—"Between the hours of half-past five o'clock p.m. and seven p.m. a uniform maximum rate of 5*s.* will be charged for messages under twenty words; 2*s.* 6*d.* extra will be charged for every additional words or fractions of twenty words. Orders for carriages, horses, beds, and other messages for the accommodation of travellers, 2*s.* 6*d.* each."——The American Southern Telegraph Company, whose line extends from New York through Philadelphia and Baltimore, to Washington, a distance of about 650 miles, has declared their first annual dividend of 6 per cent.

Masonry *v.* Brickwork.—At a dinner recently given in Birkenhead to the workmen, on the occasion of completing some villas, Mr. Hay, the architect, took occasion to impress upon the workmen, more especially the masons, the need of making themselves thoroughly acquainted with not only the practical part of their work, but the theoretical. He stated that he had travelled over a great portion of the kingdom, and he believed it to be an indisputable fact, that nowhere could mason-work be done cheaper than in Liverpool, and yet for one stone house they had whole streets of mean looking brick-work. Who was to blame he would not inquire. They had an abundant supply of stone, readily excavated, and at a smaller cost than in any place where he had been; and, from the nature of the material, it was worked with great facility, so much so, as to reduce its ultimate cost to a level with any of the other places, notwithstanding the disparity of wages, which in many instances are 30 per cent. less than in this neighbourhood. They were sadly deficient in good workmen, which was one cause of there being less masonry than there otherwise would be; and it was well worthy of those persons to evince a deeper interest in acquiring a knowledge of their business, not only for the benefit of themselves, but of their fellow workmen, and the trade at large.

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